

## **BOEM ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES PROGRAM: Ongoing Study**

**Region:** Pacific

**Planning Area(s):** Hawaii

**Title:** Maritime Cultural Resources Site Assessment in the Main Hawaiian Islands (PC-13-01)

**BOEM Information Need(s) to be Addressed:** The State of Hawaii has mandated a goal of achieving 70% clean energy by 2030. In order to meet this goal, development of offshore renewable energy resources and construction of inter-island transmission cables will be necessary. With passage of the Energy Policy Act of 2005, BOEM has assumed jurisdiction for some types of renewable energy development on the OCS, and is required under multiple statutes (Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, NEPA and National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)) to take into consideration the impacts of OCS activities on cultural and archaeological resources and traditional cultural properties. To achieve compliance with these laws, BOEM has developed regulations and guidance documents directing lease and permit holders to avoid impacting any archaeological resources identified during the survey or development of their leases (e.g., BOEM Geophysical, Geological and Archaeological Guidelines (GGARCH) 21 April 2011). While it is possible to avoid impacting known cultural resources on the seafloor, it is not always possible to avoid visual impacts to coastal historic or traditional cultural properties. The purpose of this study is to provide baseline information on submerged and shoreline archaeological resources and traditional cultural properties in the coastal zone. This information is necessary under Section 106 of the NHPA, which requires that federal agencies must apply the National Register Criteria to properties that may be affected by a federal undertaking and will also be used to support reviews under NEPA and other federal laws.

**Total BOEM Cost:** \$900,000      **Period of Performance:** FY 2013-2016

**Conducting Organization:** NOAA Maritime Heritage Program and NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries

**Principal Investigators:** Hans Van Tilburg, Ph.D. and James Delgado, Ph.D.

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### **Description:**

Background: The BOEM has completed, or is in the process of completing, baseline studies of known and reported submerged cultural and archaeological resources in each OCS Region off the contiguous U.S.; however, no such baseline study has ever been completed off the main Hawaiian Islands for any federal agency. As a result, there is very limited information currently available regarding potential submerged cultural resources off the main Hawaiian Islands.

While remote sensing surveys will be required of permittees for all offshore activities within areas of potential effect, an inventory of known and potential archaeological resources developed

by the proposed study will help guide decisionmakers in developing appropriate mitigation strategies and best management practices for targets located by remote sensing; the development of an effective survey strategy is contingent upon knowing the nature of these resources and where they most likely may be located.

The main Hawaiian Islands also contain numerous historic and traditional cultural properties that could potentially be impacted visually by offshore siting. Determining whether a property may be adversely impacted is a requirement of Section 106 of the NHPA. The basis for making the determination of whether a property is adversely impacted depends upon the description within the property listing or the archaeological and historic assessment of the property. If, within the description, the rationale for listing the property or its potential eligibility includes the visual aspects of its surroundings, then the property may be adversely impacted by visual disruption. Native Hawaiian Organizations may also have ceremonial or religious ties to certain areas that could be impacted from offshore renewable energy development. An analysis of the potential for visual impacts from offshore energy development to coastal historic and traditional cultural properties and landscapes that are either listed on, or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) has never been conducted for the main Hawaiian Islands. These properties can include historic structures, historic archaeological sites, prehistoric archaeological sites, sacred sites and traditional use areas, among others.

There is a critical need to complete a baseline study of historic and cultural properties and potential properties, develop a digital database of known and reported submerged cultural resources, compile ethnographic interviews from Native Hawaiians, and develop a digital database of historic properties and property types within the region of the main Hawaiian Islands.

Objectives: The primary objectives of this study are:

- Develop a geo-referenced database of known, reported, and potential historic shipwrecks on the Pacific OCS off the main Hawaiian Islands emphasizing the use of primary sources;
- Identify and develop a database of land-based historic properties, landscapes, and property types that could be adversely impacted by the alteration of the view of the ocean;
- Develop a proactive approach to working with the indigenous Native Hawaiian community in order to identify areas of significance that need to be considered in the planning process for offshore renewable energy development.

Methods: The proposed study will collect information from archival and secondary sources of known, reported, and potential archaeological sites on the Pacific OCS off the main Hawaiian Islands and synthesize this information into a Microsoft Access database; collect information from archival and secondary sources to develop an MS Access database of land-based properties and landscapes listed, and potentially eligible for listing, on the NRHP; compile ethnographic information from Native Hawaiian Organizations regarding traditional use and traditional cultural properties that could be impacted by offshore development; identify protocols for incorporating traditional knowledge into NHPA and NEPA analysis; and prepare a final report of findings that details the efforts to compile the databases and provides an historic context of site types that can be expected in the project area.

**Current Status:** The study was awarded in May 2013 and a post-award meeting was held in June 2013. Archival research for the underwater cultural heritage is currently underway. Work on the second and third objectives is expected to begin in October 2013.

**Final Report Due:** May 2016

**Publications Completed:** None at this time.

**Affiliated WWW Sites:** None at this time.

**Revised Date:** September 30, 2013